

RITHWIK S.

poof!

Language

Perfect English Grammar

THE MOST NOTORIOUS
MISTAKES

About the Author



My name is Rithwik. I am a high school student currently studying in California. Last summer, I visited some friends in India and came to understand a few things: New English learners are great at understanding English, but when they speak, they make mistakes. These mistakes seem difficult to fix, but in reality, they are extremely simply.

That's why I decided to write this book: to specifically target these common but simple errors.

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Introduction

Welcome to Poof Grammar! Before we begin, I want to make sure you understand how to use this book. On the next page, you will see some basics of English sentence structure, just to give you a quick refresher. This book will work really well for you if you are at a certain level. You should know how to speak English to the extent where you can communicate what your intent is to people. When you speak in English, if others know what you mean but the grammar and language is not great, then this book will be perfect for you.

Take your time to practice and understand each rule, especially the confusing ones. Use the internet or any other sources you have to help you!

You should always have a some form of a dictionary with you while learning English, you will always have to look up new words. Online dictionaries are the best, because they will give you many sentence examples.

Why should you learn English?

1. Official language of the most powerful countries in this world, spoken by billions of people.

2. The most dominant language for business, to succeed in the business world you *must* know English. This also means correct English will impress employers when you are looking for a job.
3. 50 percent of the Internet is written in English, and almost all of the valued material is written in English.

Basic Grammar

Sentence Structure Refresher

To be a complete sentence, a sentence must

- **Have a Subject**
 - Tom became fat after he ate all my food.
- **Have a Verb (action)**
 - Tom became fat after he ate all my food.
- **Show a complete thought**
 - **Incorrect:** Before Tom became fat **or** Tom became fat after.

This sentence is incorrect because it is incomplete.

When using prepositions like "before, after, then..." there should be two phrases relating to the preposition. Here, there is only one. The correct sentence would be: Before Tom became fat, he never ate meat **or** Tom became fat after he started eating meat. The "Tom became fat" part counts as one part, and the "eating meat" is the second.

There are more examples of complete sentences, we will look at those soon!

Types of Sentences

- An independent clause is a phrase that contains 1 subject and 1 verb and is a complete thought. Therefore, it is independent and can stand on its own as a complete sentence. When joining independent clauses, a comma should be used -

but don't forget the conjunction. We will talk about this later.

- A dependent clause has a subject and a verb but cannot stand on its own, it is not a complete thought.

1. Simple Sentence: Only **1 independent clause**
a. **I hate Bob.**

2. Compound Sentence: at least **2 independent clauses** with a *conjunction* (word that joins two parts of the sentence.)

a. **I hated Bob, so I hit his face.**

3. Complex Sentence: **1 Independent clause** and 1 dependent clause

a. **I hate Bob** because he is rude.

4. Compound-Complex Sentence: at least **2 independent clauses** and 1 dependent clause, with a *conjunction*. A combination of compound and complex sentences.

a. Because I hate Bob, **I hit him in the face,** and **sometimes he hits me back.**

Common Errors

Contractions:

Your vs. You're

- "Your" is a possessive word. Possessive means "to own." For example, *if you buy a new bike, you possess it now. So using the words "your," "his," "her," or "their" is to show this possession.*
 - "You're" is a contraction, on the other hand. If you want to see if the use of "you're" is correct, replace it with "you are." You're = You are.

Remember this difference between *your* and *you're*.

"Its" is also a possessive word. Although, there is one big difference between "your" and "its." "It" is only used for non-human objects. For example, **"My dog is very cute. Its collar is blue."**

When you put an apostrophe (') before the s in "its," you get a contraction: "it's."

Just like "you're," "it's" can be replaced with two words: it is. Anywhere you see it's, replace it with "it is" (or sometimes "it has") to see if the sentence is correct. For example, replacing "its" in the previous example

sentence with "it's": "My dog is very cute. It's collar is blue." = "My dog is very cute. It is collar is blue."

Obviously, this is an incorrect sentence. We can say "The collar it has is blue," but we cannot say "It is collar is blue."

There vs. Their vs. They're

There is to show where something is, for example:

- *Where is the candy?*
- *It's right there!*
 - Or to practice the "it's" contraction, "It is right there!"

"Their" is possessive, but plural and away from yourself. So if you were talking to your friend about another group of friends:

- Friend 1: *Hey, look, I found a phone!*

You: *No, don't take it. That is not our phone, that is their phone.*

- *Or, No, don't take it. That is not ours, it's (it is) theirs.*

This is how you can use "theirs" or "ours." These two words come at the end of the sentence, and "their"/"our" come right before the object (in this example, the phone.) However, they mean the same

thing - these are just two different ways to make a sentence with them.

When you are not using pronouns (Pronouns are replacements for names, like "he, she, them..." you can show possession by using an apostrophe.

When you are using pronouns, you have to use a different form of the pronoun to show possession. For example,

This shows that Bob owns the car, it is his car, he possesses it.

¹Following - This word refers to anything that comes after it. Here, it is telling you to look at the paragraph below.

Affect vs. Effect

Affect is a verb, which means it is an action. You can say, "My marks were affected by my bad exam score." Effect is a noun, so it is a "thing." You have to talk about as if it were the subject/object of the sentence. You can say, "The effect that I had on my brother was big."

Then vs. Than

You can use "than" when comparing two objects only. Example:

This apple is bigger than that apple.

Then is used in all other circumstances. You can use it to talk about the next thing that happened: I ate an apple, *then* I ate a banana.

Lose vs. Loose

Lose means to forget something, or misplace something. For example, *"I lost my backpack, I think it is at school."*

Loose means weak and not tight. "That is a loose rope, you have to make it tight to hold onto the box."

Usage of "Any"

Remember that the word *any* is a plural word. It is talking about more than one thing, for example:

➤ *Do you have any ideas for my project?*

Notice how the subject is **plural**, when using the word *any*. Just like this sentence, every time you use *any*, the subject must be plural.

Sometimes, there may be confusion when using pronouns. This happens when there two or more nouns with the same gender. See this example:

> *Bobby told Timmy that he was being accused of robbing the bank.*

Notice the underlined word *he*. Who is this *he*? We don't know if it is Bobby or Timmy. In this case, where

Common Phrases

I will use these phrases many times in this book, here are some clarifications. Once again, make sure to have a nice dictionary with you at all times!

Rather: This is just another way of saying *instead*. You can use this phrase when something is different from another.

For example,

> *I don't like ice cream. Rather, I like chocolate.*

> *I used glue rather than tape.*

In which / With which:

Any case with "preposition + which" uses *which* as a pronoun. For example,

> *He drank the coffee in which the villain poured poison.*

- Notice that the preposition *in* is put before *which*. We do not say *poured in poison*, *poured poison* is good enough. This is because we said *in which* - the "in" is already in the sentence before "which." Make sure you don't make this mistake.

Basic Pronouns

A **pronoun** is just a replacement for a proper noun. Note that "proper noun" is just a fancy way of saying "name." You can use these pronouns to replace names, so that you don't have to keep repeating the name. *He, She, They, It*, and *We* are the most common pronouns. These are the subjective pronouns. The objective pronouns are slightly different. We will look at them in the next few pages.

Here is a good example that includes everything we have learned so far:

> *We are inviting everyone to our party.*

> *Anybody who says it won't be fun has no idea what they're talking about.*

Here, the speaker is saying the party will be very fun. He is saying that anyone thinks it will be boring is wrong.

1. *Anybody* is a plural pronoun, because it has "any" in it. This is one of the pronouns.
 - a. *Anybody* is referring to anyone that thinks the party won't be fun.
2. *It* is another pronoun. *It* is just a replacement for *party*.
3. *They're* is a contraction for "They are." It is a subjective pronoun, which means it is the subject of the sentence (or part of the subject.)
4. Me, Myself, and I

The words Me, Myself, and I can often prove to be confusing. When should you use each one? First of all, "myself" is completely different from the other two. It is a reflexive pronoun - you are the subject *and* the object. You are talking about yourself, there are no other major objects involved.

**Himself, herself, yourself, itself, and themselves* are all reflexive pronouns, but they work the same way as "myself."

Let's start by looking at how to use the word "myself." There are two ways that you should use this word.

1) This will likely be the most common. You can use "myself" when both the subject and object are the same thing. Remember what these terms mean: the subject is the noun that is **doing the action** and the object is the noun that is **being acted on**. If I say,

> I hit the ball.

Then "hit" is the action, I am the subject, and the ball is the object. Similarly, if I say,

> I hit myself.

"Hit" is still the action, but now both the subject and the object are the same: me. I am the one hitting, and the thing I am hitting is **myself**.

2) The second (less common) way to use "myself" is to use it as emphasis. This means that you want to put more focus on the fact that you did the action yourself.

> I painted the picture myself.

> I myself saw the thief run away.

- Once again, putting emphasis on the fact that *you* saw the thief run away, showing that you did it.

A common situation in which "myself" is used this way:

Someone asks you if your dad, brother, or anyone other than you did some action, when really you did it:

> Did your brother make that project?

>> No, I did it myself.

It is much better to use "myself" here rather than

>> "No, I did it."

Make sure to use "myself" when:

- Someone is asking who did an action
- They think someone other than you did it **OR**
 - You want to put emphasis on the fact that *you* did it

Using "myself" like this gives a nice detail about your emotions, showing that you are proud of the action.

Remember that this is a **secondary**, it is more important to master the **1st method**.

Me vs. I

The word *I* along with *we*, *he*, *she*, *you*, and *they* are called "subjective pronouns." The reason behind the name is this: **These pronouns should only be used when they are the subject of the verb.** That includes *I*.

You should use "I" when *you* are doing the action. This is the same for sentences with many nouns, and for all the other subjective pronouns.

> I waited for the movie to start.

> Kim and I both like playing football.

(You can use the word **both** any time there are exactly **2** nouns. It can be before or after the nouns.)

> Sherry, Carole, and I all watched the movie.

The word *me* along with *us*, *him*, *her*, *you*, and, *them* are known as "objective pronouns." These, on the other hand¹, are used **only if the pronoun is the object of the verb.**

Remember this: **if you are both the subject AND the object, then use "myself," not "me" or "I."** If

you are being acted on, you are the object, then use *me*. Again, this applies when there are multiple nouns involved.

> The cat followed Sharon and me to the door.

- Here, "Sharon and me" is the object. The cat is the one following, it is doing the action. Therefore, it is the subject. Since you are part of the object, **use me**.

Remember this applies to all the other objective pronouns as well.

> Dan thanked them.

- "Them" is the object, because it is being thanked. Dan is the subject, because he is "thanking."

¹on the other hand - a phrase used to show that something is different from something else.

Could've = could have

This means that you **had** the option to do something (past tense).

Should've = should have

This means that you **had** the option to do something, and you **should** have done that. Usually, you will only use "should've" if you didn't do that action but you wanted to.

Ex. *"I should've said sorry, but I didn't."*

Didn't = did not

Would've = would have

This can be used to say that you would have done something if a condition was met, but it wasn't.

Would've is also only for past tense. For example, you can say: *"If he gave me 10 rupees, I would've done his homework, but he only gave me 5."*

Compliment vs. Complement

Compliment is a noun. Compliments are nice words you can say to people, like "good job!" or "nice try!"

"Compliment" can also be a verb. When you are saying a compliment to someone, you are "complimenting them." In this case, it would be a verb.

On the other hand, *complements* are things that add to something else, like "this soda complements that food." This sentence would mean that the soda goes well with the food, they work well together.

Fewer vs. less

If you can quantify (count) it, use *fewer*. If not, use *less*.

Ex. *I have fewer cats than you. - You can count the number of cats.*

Ex. I have less power than you. - You cannot "count" power.

Literally

When you use the word literally, you are saying that everything in the coming sentence is true as you said it. You can't say, "My homework is literally killing me," because it is not killing you, it is very difficult. You *can* say "That ghost movie literally made me pee in my pants," if you really peed in your pants.

However, it is very important to note that in spoken English, people often use this word the wrong way. People will often say, "My homework is literally killing me," even though it is not. It is fine to use "literally" like this when talking to friends, but not otherwise.

Ex. "Come to the meeting where we will discuss the cricket game on Sunday."

Writing a sentence this way is very confusing, as we do not know which is on Sunday: The meeting or the cricket game.

Apostrophes: To show that something belongs to more than one person, or multiple entities, do it by putting the apostrophe *after* the s. For a single person, you would say, this is the boy's

toy. But to say that multiple boys own the toys,
"These are the boys' toys."

'Amount' refers to something that cannot be
counter, while 'Number' does. For example:

The amount of juice in this cup is very small.

*The number of juice boxes in our house is very
small.*

To vs. Two vs. Too

To is used when talking about the basic form of a verb.
An example of a verb would be **to** run, which would be
conjugated in sentences. (Conjugating is changing the
form of the verb to match the subject and the time in
the sentence. For example, for past tense: He ran to his
house.)

Too has 2 meanings.

1. *Too* is the same thing as saying also, in
addition, or as well. Too is used when adding
something to a sentence, like: "I played with my friend
Sam. I played with my brother too." - Here, you are
playing in both sentences, so use "too."

2. *Too* can be used to say something has "more of something than allowed," or "more of something than what is possible."

a. Ex. *I ate too much food today, now my stomach hurts.*

Two is just written out version of the number 2.

Invite vs. Invitation

This rule applies to many verb/noun combos that have a similar format.

The word "invite" is the verb, so you can use it as an action.

The word "invitation" is the noun form of the action.

"I will invite you to the party."

"I gave him an invitation to the party."

The subject of a sentence is the person that is doing the action. The object is the thing that is being acted on. For example, if the verb (action) is to invite, the subject is I, and the object is you:

I invited you.

Who vs. Whom

Who refers to the subject in a sentence, while whom refers to the object.

Ex. *Whom do you want me to talk about?*

Ex. *Who is the best football player at your school?*

Nouns

A noun is a person, place, or thing. Common nouns are not capitalized, and represent non-specific things. For example, *dogs, cats, berries, and trees are all common nouns. The other type of noun is the proper noun. These are capitalized, unlike common nouns - and represent specific people, places, or things. For example, Earth, Mahatma Gandhi, and New Delhi are all proper nouns.* Specific nouns are always things that are known well for their reputation. When writing nouns as possessing something, use apostrophes like so:

For most words, simply place an apostrophe before the "s." For example, *"The boy's toy is sitting on the table."* If the noun is plural, then put the apostrophe after the "s." For example, in the same situation but with multiple boys owning a single toy: *"The boys' toy is sitting on the table."* Once again, this sentence means that many boys have possession of one toy, and that one toy is on top of the table.

Playing with sentence organization:

I believe this aspect of English is extremely vital to sounding like a native speaker. By "Playing with sentence organization," I mean switching around

predicates and phrases in general. For example, *"Johnny walked down the street as he waved his newly purchased wallet through the air" can be rearranged as "Waving his newly purchased wallet through the air, Johnny came walking down the street."* It is important to *remember your sentence must* still follow the correct grammatical rules when moving phrases. In many cases, simply moving the phrase and correcting punctuation / article will be sufficient (enough.) Let's look at several different ways we can arrange this one sentence.

Johnny walked down the street, waving his new wallet.

Johnny was waving his new wallet as he walked down the street.

Waving his new wallet, Johnny came walking down the street.

Waving his new wallet was Johnny, walking down the street.

All four of these options are very viable. The best way to make your writing sound fluid and native is to use various formats in your sentences. Instead of using one format every time, you should be varying the sentence structure. These are relatively simple sentences, and more description can be added to any of them. For

example: *"Johnny was waving his new blue wallet as he walked down the street, when several coins sprung out of its main pocket."*

The fourth example shown may be more difficult to construct, however. This format is considered more poetic than formal, so it is definitely more secondary than primary.

Singular vs. Plural

When the subject is singular, then the verb must also be singular. Similarly, when a subject is plural, the verb must also be plural. For example: *She eats all of the apples everyday.* Here, "she" is the subject, which is singular. "Eats" is the verb, which should also be singular - as it is, making this sentence correct. Here is another example: *"All of the boys play with my toys."* As you can see, the subject (boys) is plural, and so is the verb (play.) Most verbs have an "s" at the end of them when singular, and the "s" is removed when plural. Sometimes, you have to add an "es" to make it singular, or remove it to make it plural: He go to the park is incorrect. He goes to the park is correct. For this verb, like most, the verb appears different when the subject is "I." I go to the park would be the correct sentence here, but "They go to the park" is correct as well." Obviously, "I" is singular and they is plural, but they have the same verb format. So when using the subject "I," you can usually pretend that "I" is plural and make the verb plural as well.

This is an extremely important rule, and one of the most common - if not the most common mistake in English grammar. The key to not

making this mistake is recognizing exactly what the subject and verb are, this can get confusing.

But first, here are some rules:

When you see the word "of" in a phrase, the subject must always come before the word "of". For example, "*A box of coins are found in the basement*" is incorrect, because the subject comes before "of." This means that the subject is "box," which is singular, which is why "are" should be "is." The verb in this sentence is plural, while it should be singular.

Intermediate Grammar Rules

-ing words

There are two applications of words ending with -ing.

Present participle:

There are several examples of how this can be applied.

Ex. *I am reading.*

Ex. *I will be swimming today.*

The present participle can also be applied in the form verb+object+participle to show the action (verb) being observed from the outside.

Ex. *I saw him reading.*

Ex. *We saw him swimming.*

One of the most difficult uses of -ing words is parallel activity. This is to show two actions happening at the same time, except one of them would be past tense and the other would be present participle (-ing.)

Ex. *I ate watching the TV.*

Ex. *We sat discussing the homework.*

These words are also used in specific verbs.

Instead of "I enjoy to swim," you can say "I enjoy swimming."

Another example: Instead of "*I like to eat often*," - "*I like eating often*."

They are also used for present/past/future adjectives.

Excite > Exciting

That book is very exciting.

Interest > Interesting

I thought that movie was very interesting.

Amaze>Amazing

My project will be amazing!

The second method of use is through a "gerund."

Gerunds look just like the past participle form of -ing words.

Don't worry about the name, the only thing that matters is that you understand how to use it.

Gerunds can be used as the subject of a sentence~

Eating meat is wrong.

Hitting people is very rude.

The killing of our king was horrible.

A common use of an -ing word is "being."

For example, "*The vacuum cleaner is being used to clean my room.*"

-ing words are very often used after prepositions (like at, by...)

She ate the food **by** chewing slowly.

He is very good **at** painting.

Finally, another common use of the gerund - compound nouns. These are nouns that contain two words in them. For example,

Swimming lessons

Driving tests

Are both compound nouns **using** gerunds (the -ing words.)

(The word "using" in the above sentence is another way you can use these amazing tools!)

Some parts of singular/plural agreement can be tricky!
Here are some basic rules.

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/599/01/>

1) If there are two or more separate nouns joined with **"and"** then the verb must be **plural**.

>> **My friends and I are** very happy right now.

"My friends and I" is the **subject**, and it includes more than one person. Therefore, the **verb "are"** is plural.

2) If there are two or more nouns joined with **"or"** / **"nor"** / **"neither"** / **"either"** then the verb must agree with the noun **closer to the verb**. (The **blue** is one of the conjunctions above + the subjects and the **red** is the verb.)

>> **The boy and the girl both eat** a lot. ** When both subjects are singular, use "both."

>> **The two girls nor the boy is** inside.

>> **The boy nor the two girls are** inside.

>> **Neither the boy nor the two girls run** everyday.

>> **Neither the girls nor the boy runs** everyday.

>> **Either the girls or boy is** inside.

>> **Either the boy or the girls are** inside

3) *Doesn't* should only be used for **singular subjects**.

Don't should only be used for **plural subjects**.

4) When there is a phrase between the subject and the verb, **make sure to match the subject with the**

verb. Do not worry about any nouns in the phrase in between. Remember, the verb should match with the noun that is doing the action.

The **Blue** is the subject, the **Red** is the verb (predicate), and the **Green** is the phrase in between. You can simply remove the green phrase to see if the verb agrees with the subject after that. This will make it easier.

>> **One** of the **boxes** **is** **big**.

>> **The book**, including all of the chapters inside, **is** **very boring**.

You will often see a comma after the subject and a comma after the confusing phrase in between. You can just remove everything between the commas and use the same strategy to check for agreement.

5) The words ***each*** , ***each one*** , ***everyone*** , ***everybody*** , ***anybody*** , ***anyone*** , ***nobody***, ***somebody*** , ***someone*** , and ***no one*** are all singular.

>> Each one of the cats was cute.

Quotations are often hard to use. It is difficult to remember where to put commas and periods,

semicolons and dashes. Formatting in general is annoying but important - that's exactly why we have a whole chapter on it.

First, we'll go over how to use the difficult types of "punctuation marks."

Quotes (Quotations):

Used to show that something may be unknown to most people, or weird. Also can be used when taking information directly from another source.

Ex. *A common chess move to counter this is known as "en passant."*

Ex. *As said by the President of the US, "We will fight to gain domination."*

Parentheses:

Used to express extra or additional information on a word or phrase in the sentence.

Unless the *whole* sentence is in parentheses, the period goes after the parentheses. (Parentheses also have periods on the inside when performing MLA citations, but that's not important for us right now.)

Ex. *The King of Arabia (Salman) is known to be very honourable.*

Ex. *There are 10 different countries in this continent (12 if you include the smallest ones).*

Colon:

Colons are most often used before lists and quotes. For example,

My grocery list was very short: eggs, carrots, and milk.

He spit out an ignorant comment: "All of them are evil."

Semicolon:

Used to separate two independent clauses in a sentence to make it more organized.

Ex. *School was no longer in session; summer break had begun.*

Now comes the use of these in Quotations.

Semicolons, colons, and dashes (used to separate parts of a sentence, not just independent clauses) all go **outside** of the quotes.

Ex. *He laughed and said, "Come on dude, you can't worry about me like that" - and with that he was gone in an instant.*

For question marks and exclamation marks, it depends. If the question/exclamation is only within the quotes, then the marks stay in the quotes. If the question/exclamation applies to the whole sentence, then they go on the outside.

Ex. *I watched him as he exclaimed, "How dare you eat my cookies!"*

Ex. *I couldn't believe it, she ate all of my cookies and lied, "I didn't eat them!"*

(Here, the whole sentence is showing exclamation, as shown by the first phrase: I couldn't believe it).

Finally: periods and commas. These are variable based on what English you are using - British English or American English. In the United States, commas and periods always go on the inside of quotations. Everywhere else (British English) they can be placed either on the inside or the outside - your choice.

Ex. *British: He brushed his hair and said, "I'm so glad to see you".*

Ex. *American or British: He brushed his hair and said, "I'm so glad to see you."*

*One aspect of quotes that may be confusing is the use of "double quotes."

Double quotes happen when you want to have a quote within a quote. When this happens, simply use apostrophes (single quotes) instead of regular quotes on the inside.

Ex. *"I asked him for an answer, and he replied with 'That's for me to know and for you to find out.'"*

Quick Tip: If you want to use the phrase "prior to," just use "before" instead.

Don't say "Prior to my exam, I studied." Just say "I studied before the exam."

Quick Tip: Use "on accident" instead of "by accident," it makes you sound smarter and it's the more modern form!

Among vs. Amongst: They are both used the same way and mean the same thing, although "amongst" is used in British English and considered more professional.

Ex. *"I sat amongst / among the most powerful men in the world."*

Errors

"Say me." - WRONG

When you want someone to speak to you or tell you something, the correct phrase is:

"Tell me." - CORRECT

"Explain me." - WRONG

This is another incorrect phrase. To tell someone to explain something to you, say:

"Explain (this) to me."

"Ask to me." - WRONG

This is a little confusing, because it is the opposite of the last rule.

"Ask me." - CORRECT

I remember this by looking at which word has more letters. Ask is very short, only three letters - so I remember that the sentence must also be short and *not* include "to." Explain is much longer, 7 letters. From that, I remember the sentence should use "to" and should also describe what needs to be explained to create a long sentence. **Ask = short, "Ask me" = short. Explain = long, "Explain this to me" = long.**

"I lost the bus/train." - WRONG

You are trying to say that the bus/train got away before you could catch it.

"I couldn't catch the bus/train." - CORRECT

"The bus/train got away." - CORRECT

"I missed the bus/train." - CORRECT

"I win you." - WRONG

You want to say that you got victory over the other person.

"I beat you." - CORRECT

"I won." - CORRECT

"I win." - This is technically wrong because it is present tense and we are looking at past tense. However, in spoken English, it is usable.

Introductions, Greetings, and Conversation

Starters

Nice to see you again!

It's great to have you here.

Long time no see!

How are you?

Hey, what's going on?

Hey, What's new? or "Hey, what's up?"

Help yourself.

A way to tell someone they can feel welcome to take something. For example,

"Can I have a cookie?"

"Help yourself."

Do you mind if I ask about...

This way you can make sure the other person is comfortable when asking a personal question.

"Do you mind if I ask a question about your wife?"

"Sure, go ahead."

"How's that sound?" - A short form of "How does that sound?"

Use to ask for confirmation from someone.

Ex. *"First we can watch a movie. Then you can come to my house to play some games. How's that sound?"*
"Sounds good."

As far as I know...

Use this at the beginning of a sentence to show that you may be wrong, and you are speaking from whatever knowledge you have.

Ex. *"As far as I know, the price of gold has stayed the same today."*

Once again, remember the best way to learn how to speak naturally is to practice speaking in English. The ideal way is to talk with native English speakers so they can teach you.

When talking with native English speakers when you are still learning to speak, you can say:

"I'm sorry, can you slow down a bit?"

By saying this, you are showing a weakness (your English) but you will have a chance to understand them better.

Commas

The easiest way to understand commas (,) is to understand basic speech. The easiest way to understand basic speech is to listen to a lot of spoken English.

Commas should be placed wherever you would pause when speaking, if you were to say the sentence out loud.

Although, there are some rules to remember.

When using the word "so," you must use a comma. However, when using "so that," commas are unnecessary. For example,

He ate the large apple pie, so now he has excruciating stomach pain.

He played with his sister so that she would not be bored.

Commas should also (almost) always come after what we call "introductory elements."

These are phrases that come at the beginning of a sentence. Here are the types of intro elements that you should look out for, along with examples

Preposition: Words that show place or time.

At night, ...

In the morning, ...

Under the desk, Tom sat quietly.

Above the tree, the cat screeched loudly.

Participle: Verbs ending with "ed" or "ing."

Gobbling up his rice, Sean reached for the TV remote.

As he asked for a pencil, Bob continued tapping his foot on the floor.

Infinitive: A verb with "to" before it

To avoid beating beat by his father, Prabhu ran away from his house.

To accept the award, he walked up to the stage.

Appositive: A description of the subject of the sentence, given before the subject is named.

The best football player at the school, Ray asked his parents for a new set of boots.

A prolific¹ reader, Becky sat in the corner with a large book.

¹Experienced, someone who does something a lot.

When you join two sentences together to create a single sentence, you have to make sure you have done so correctly.

Combining Sentences

Here is an example of an incorrectly combined sentence:

The girl rode in her motorcycle the wind blew dust into her face.

You cannot simply place a comma in between! This is wrong:

The girl rode in her motorcycle, the wind blew dust into her face.

There are various methods that can be used to fix this problem.

1) You can just split them, so that there are two *complete* sentences instead of a combined sentences.

The girl rode in her motorcycle. The wind blew dust into her face.

2) You can add a comma, but you need a coordinating **conjunction**.

Here is an easy way to remember all of the coordinating conjunctions:

FANBOYS

F - For

A - And

N - Nor

B - But

O - Or

Y - Yet

S - So

The girl rode in her motorcycle, **and** the wind blew dust into her face.

3) You can use a **subordinate conjunction**.

Here is a list:

after	how	till (or 'til)
although	if	unless
as	inasmuch	until
as if	in order that	when
as long as	lest	whenever
as much as	now that	where
as soon as	provided (that)	wherever
as though	since	while
because	so that	
before	than	
even if	that	
even though	though	

These are sometimes difficult to use, because you have to know when to use which one. However, you'll find that this comes with practice very easily.

One of the most commonly used subordinate conjunction is "as." This can be used as long as the two clauses that are being joined are happening at the same time.

Ex.

The girl rode in the motorcycle as the wind blew dust into her face.

While the girl rode in the motorcycle, the wind blew dust into her face.

Whenever the girl rode in the motorcycle, the wind blew dust into her face.

Timothy ate the food, **even though** his mother told him not to.

You will find that the sentence structure is fairly malleable (flexible, can be moved around) when using subordinate clauses. In common speech, even if you place the subordinate clause in the wrong part of the sentence, the meaning may still be conveyed.

Ex.

You can keep playing, as long as you finish your homework.

As long as you finish your homework, you can keep playing.

Fragments

A fragment is a huge writing error. This happens when you don't have a complete thought, and the sentence doesn't make any sense - hence the name, "fragment." All you will have is a fragment of a sentence. You can either add the fragment to another sentence, or complete the fragment into a full sentence. Either way, you must end up with a complete thought.

You must also have a **subject** and a **verb**, this is known as a subordinate clause. First of all, check if you have the above. If either a subject or a verb is missing, you immediately know that the sentence is a fragment, and therefore incorrect. You must then add the subject / verb. Here are some examples:

Incorrect:

Ate the apple pie. (Missing Subject)

Robert and the frog together. (Missing Verb)

Correct:

He ate the apple pie.

Robert and the frog danced playfully together.

One thing to watch out for is a **verbal**.

Verbals are already derived from a verb, so they cannot change forms. Any verb that describes *the state of the subject* rather than *what they are doing*.

"State of being" verbs come in several forms, usually when they are already conjugated but without an article

For example, if you want to use the word "eating," you must have an article before it. This article could be words such as *am*, *were*, or *was*. If a phrase ending with *-ing* or *-ed* comes immediately before the subject, without an article, then it must be part of the subject.

That means it is *not* the verb. It is "part of the subject," it is the subject itself.

The shouting students.

-We know this sentence is wrong, because "shouting students" is the subject itself. There is no verb.

>> The shouting students goofed around.

-This sentence *does* have a verb: *goofed*.

Zach having finished the race.

- This sentence is incorrect because, once again, the "having finished" is part of the subject. It is part of Zac's identity. If we wanted to make "finished" the verb, the sentence must be "Zach **had** / **has** finished the race." Remember that this is conjugated differently - that is because "having finished" is conjugated wrongly, as we stated before. That is why it must be corrected to this:

>> Zach having finished the race was very tired.

Robert having eaten the food.

-This sentence is incorrect because "having eaten" is part of the subject. Eaten does not end with ing or ed, but it is an exception. Robert's identity itself is "having eaten."

>> Robert having eaten the food was no longer hungry.

Making Sure Your Sentence has a Complete Thought

You can make sure the sentence has a complete thought by looking at whether there are any words that "depend" on an answer. These are usually

subordinate conjunctions or **relative pronouns**
/ **relative adverbs** at the start of the sentence.

If there are any of these "dependent words," you must check if there is a clause in the sentence to match the word. If the clause that the word is depending on exists, **then the sentence is a complete thought.**

Here are the most common ones, along with some examples. See the next page.

Making Complete Thoughts

Subordinating Conjunctions and Relative Pronouns /
Adverbs

after	since	when
although	so that	whenever
as	supposing	where
because	than	whereas
before	that	wherever
but that	though	whether
if	though	which
in order that	till	while
lest	unless	who
no matter	until	why
how	what	even though

The **blue word/phrase** is the dependent word, in each of the following sentences.

The **highlighted word/phrase** is the pair for the **blue word**. It is completing the pair to create a full thought.

Whenever you have one of these words (look above) you must complete the pair.

Because he stole the wallet, **Bob went to jail.**

After the woman cooked the potato, **she put it in the salad.**

No matter how fast you run, you can never be as fast as lightning.

Even though you are better than me, I can still beat you.

Whenever you are going to the park, call me so I can come with you.

Unless you are Mukesh Ambani, you cannot buy this house.

Before he became rich, he was a poor beggar.

- If you remove the highlighted phrase, there is no complete thought. Try removing it for each example to see **what not to do**.

Dangling Modifiers

When there is a modifier at the beginning of a sentence, a subject must come right after it. You know there is a modifier if a predicate is in the beginning of a sentence, without a subject. For example,

"Eating from the plate, Johnny was enjoying his dinner."

Notice how "eating from the plate" is the predicate, but it does not have a subject. That means it is a modifier. This sentence is correct, because there is a subject that comes right after the modifier. This subject is "Johnny." The modifier does not have to be a predicate, it can just be a description. It will never have a subject in it, that is how you know it is the modifier.

> A very bright student, studying every day was Mukesh. - INCORRECT

>> A very bright student, Mukesh studied every day.

Articles Before Nouns

An article is a word such as: *the, an, a*, etc. These are called “determiners.” Another determiner is a possessive noun, like *Bob’s*.

Proper Nouns never need a determiner. Recall that proper nouns are names. Ex. *Jupiter, Saturn, Amy*.

Ex. *Jupiter is very big.*

Plural Nouns can go without a determiner. Recall that plural nouns are just multiple nouns.

Ex. *Cats like to eat pie.*

This means that cats like to eat pie in general.

Ex. *The cats like to eat pie, or Those cats like to eat pie.*

This sentence is talking about a specific group of cats.

***When using “A” as a determiner, it can mean a single noun OR showing that the noun is random.**

Ex. *A cat crossed the street.*

This could mean 1 cat crossed the street *or* some random cat crossed the street, not specific.

Uncountable nouns also don’t need a determiner. Ex. *Information, Analyzation...*

Revising Your Essay

When you are revising an English essay for any mistakes, there are some very easy tricks that can make your paper all the more better.

1. Keep in mind everything you have learned from this book!
2. Read the paper out loud, forwards.
3. Now read it out loud, sentence by sentence, backwards.
4. Look at the instructions for the essay. What does it ask for exactly, and does your paper meet the requirements?
5. Next, is it very clear in what it is trying to say? Ask a friend to read it and tell if you if they understood everything that you wrote.

These tips are slightly more advanced, they should not be used until you are sure that at least most of the grammatical mistakes have been corrected.

1. Make sure that each sentence varies in length. You should not have many long sentences everywhere, or many short sentence everywhere. Keep it different.
2. Don't repeat the same word too many times. You should not repeat a specific word more than 2-3 times in most essays. Obviously, this

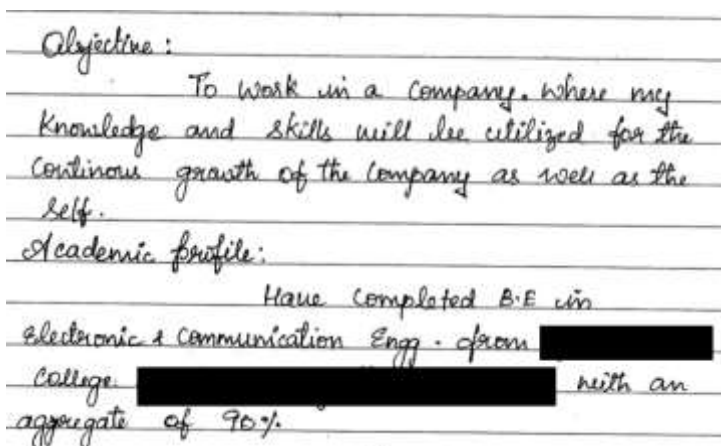
does not include basic words like "the" or pronouns.

3. Try to be as concise as possible. Do not use many words if you can say the same thing with less words. At the same time, if your explanation is too short, you have to use more words. Do not make the quality of the information less, and don't use any extra words.

Correcting Essay Examples

These are examples of writing from foreign speakers between ages 13 and 25. We'll look at some of the mistakes, and suggest improvements anywhere that they are needed. We'll go through the sentences that may need editing. Maybe one of these is your essay!

Example #1



- Meghna, Résumé Draft

1) Objective: To work in a company, where my knowledge and skills will be utilized for the continuous growth of the company as well as the self.

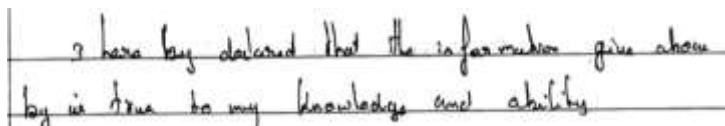
- Objective: To work in a company in which my knowledge and skills will be utilized in order to grow the company as well as myself.

We see that “where” was used instead of “in which.” Using “where” is technically correct, but to find out which one is better, we can look at the root meaning of each phrase. “Where” is asking about a place, “in which” could be asking about any noun. **A company is not necessarily a place**, so “in which” is better here.

Use “in order to” when you are **expressing the purpose of something**. Use “for” when you are not sure what to use. Here we are talking about the purpose of using the knowledge and skills.

When you are talking about yourself, always use *me*, *myself*, *I*, and other personal pronouns. Also, “self.” Is a pronoun. Remember that we never put “the” before a pronoun.

Example #2



I have hereby declared that the information given above by me is true to my knowledge and ability.

- MV, Résumé Draft

1) I hereby declared that the information give above is true to my knowledge and ability.

- I hereby declare that the information given above is true to the extent of my knowledge.

When using “hereby,” you are talking in the present tense (definition of hereby.) Thus you must make sure the verb (predicate) is in the present tense – “declared” is past tense, it must be “declare” (present tense.)

In “information give above,” we are talking about the recent past (past perfect tense.) You can check what tense something should be in by looking at when the action should have happened. Assume that the author of this paper has written the “information” above this sentence. Was that information written:

- 1) 1 year before (past)
- 2) 1 minute before (past perfect)
- 3) At the same time as this sentence (present)
- 4) After this sentence (future)

The correct tense is #2, or past perfect. A person cannot write two sentences at the same time, so in cannot be “give,” which is past tense.

Example #3

for the post of network developer. As my academic credentials meet your requirements and needs I am willing to serve for your company. I request you to call me for a personal interview to prove my calibre. If I am appointed I would work hard for the development of the company

- ST, Résumé Draft

1) *"... I am willing to serve for you."*

- *I am willing to serve you.*

When using the word "serve," do not ever put "for" after it. This is because the subject of "serve" is the person that you are serving. The person that you are serving is not outside of the verb, it is part of the subject-verb group.

Similarly, if you want to ask the teacher a question, you say "Ask Mr. San," not "Ask for Mr. San."

2) "I request you to call me for a personal interview to prove my caliber. "

- *I request you to call me for a personal interview so that I may prove my caliber.*

This sentence is correct, but the nouns are very mixed which makes it difficult to understand. If you add “so” before the second part of the sentence, it will split the sentence into two clauses. This way, it will sound clearer. Also, “may” is a more formal (better) word than “can.”

(This is because “can” means that you have the ability to do something, and “may” means that someone is allowing you to do something.)

Example #4

- RK, Technical English Course

1) “More and more industries affects the people so fast.”

- *More and more industries affect the people very fast.*

① *Recommendation followed for safety in a factory.*

* *It is recommended to wear safety guard in factories.*

* *It is suggested to stop mixing the industrial waste into water.*

* *More and More industries affect the people so fast. So it is safe to be away.*

* *We should construct industries away from the cities.*

* *It is recommended to wear gloves while working.*

* *It is suggested to build a canal for the waste which comes out of industries.*

The subject is “industries,” the verb is “affects.”

“Affects” is a singular verb, but the subject is plural – therefore the verb must become plural - “affect.”

When the word “so” is used, you must compare the noun to something after using the word. If not, then use “very.” For example, if “so” must be used here, the sentence could be something like this: *“More and more industries affect the people so fast that they cannot handle the pressure.”* The other sentences are fine.

Example #5

1. Run backup data once a week
2. Defragment Hard Drive monthly to keep computer to run smoothly
3. Install antivirus software must be ensured
4. Keep food or Drink or eat in front of the computer
5. Uninstall the programs which is not used often
6. Keep it cool all time
7. Press the button of the computer softly to avoid damage.
8. Keep the computer away from the kids

- SVS, Technical English Course

1) "Defragment hard drive monthly to keep computer to run smoothly."

- *Defragment the hard drive monthly to keep the computer running smoothly.*

"Hard drive" and "computer" should have *the* before them, because they are not proper nouns and they are also not plural.

2) "Install antivirus must be ensured."

- *Ensure that the antivirus is installed.*

There has to be *the* / *an* before “antivirus,” because it is not a pronoun and it is not plural. The sentence structure here is completely wrong. The verb “ensure” is not acting as the verb, but it should be. Instead, “install” is the verb, which is wrong – it should be the adjective describing the antivirus.

Here is the final example. I will show the corrections in the essay instead of explaining them, because this one is rather long.

My Experience – Neymar Junior – by Praveen

He is a ~~rocker~~ rockstar of soccer, no one can defeat him easily. He is the legend of soccer and so I took him as my role model in my life. I know that not every one will the get ~~the~~ this chance easily. First, ~~So~~ I will ~~first~~ explain his life experience ~~in soccer~~.

1) His Soccer Experience:-

His full name is Neymar da Silva Santos junior. He was born on the 5th of February 1992. He is a Brazilian professional soccer player who plays as a forward for Spanish club FC Barcelona and the Brazil national team. At the age of 19, Neymar Jr won the 2011 south American soccer player of the

year award, after coming third in 2010. He followed this up by winning it again in 2012. His professional jersey number is 11.

2) HIS EARLY LIFE:-

Neymar da Silva Santos junior was born in Mogi das Cruzes, Sao Paulo, to Neymar Santos, sr. and Nadine da Silva. He inherited his name from his father, who is a former soccer player and became his son's advisor as Neymar's talents began to grow. Neymar comments on his father's role, "my father has been by my side since I was little. He takes care of things, my finances and my family. " Growing up, Neymar combined his love of futsal with street football.

My Experience with Neymar Jr

~~So now my experience how I met Neymar Jr~~
? I am a great fan of Neymar Jr . I was waiting eagerly for my legend and searching ~~often in the internet~~ **often** for ~~any matches~~ es going to be held in the USA (united states of America) . ~~se~~ After a few days one of my ~~friend~~ **friends** gave **me** the update, that Neymar Jr is coming to our country on 20 august 2016 for the Rio Olympics, playing for Brazil. I was shocked **immediately** ~~In a~~

~~minute~~, I ran like a cheetah to my house,
said that my dream **was** going to be alive.
My parents asked me “What happen to you?
Why are you hurried?” I joyfully said, “My
dream has come alive.” My parents asked,
“What do you mean ?” Again I said clearly
that professional footballer Neymar Jr is ~~in~~
~~live to~~ **is like in** our USA stadium. My
parents said we **would** ~~will~~ go and see the
match. The second my parents said we’ll go
I shouted like gorilla. and cried ~~in~~ **on** my
football . After a long ~~ago~~ **time** , my dream
had come true, I rushed to the stadium
~~before 2-3 hrs~~ **2-3 hours before the game.**
After that an a announcement was made that
all players are ~~player all~~ entering the soccer
field . And I heard Neymar Jr number 10
brazil is entering the grassy land and the
moment he crossed me and I saw him, my
heart melted ~~heart went with him a~~ in
second and ~~in my eyes with tears and~~
~~shouted in the time he crossed me.~~ **with**
tears in my eyes, shouted when he crossed
me.

Soon the match started. My only focus on him, and his playing was miraculously and mind blowing. Finally, Brazil had won the game.

***Remember, if there is speech, you must use quotations around the spoken words.**

Thank you so much for reading this book!

If you have any questions at all, research the topic online, or email me at poofgrammar@gmail.com. If you want a book that covers more grammar topics, keep reading.

I have used several other books for inspiration, and I have found the following to be very useful. You can buy these books online from Amazon, either a physical copy or a Kindle eBook.

They are both under 10 US Dollars / 650 Rupees.

These books explain grammar very well, and if you are unsure about some of the topics in this book, they will explain them well.

1)

"The Only Grammar Book You'll Ever Need: A One-Stop Source for Every Writing Assignment"

2)

"Perfect English Grammar: The Indispensable Guide to Excellent Writing and Speaking"

If you want to learn spoken English, you should always practice with an English speaker.

If you cannot, this website will help:

www.spokenenglishcourse.net

There are many books for spoken English as well, and any of them will work. You can use other online sources as well, such as YouTube videos. Good Luck, and all the best!

Credits

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